Why the hyphen? Individual and collective memories of Italianness in the United States at the intersection of class and generation

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Abstract

This three-generation oral history study offers insight into why descendants of Italian migrants to the United States still choose hyphenated identities today. The research project shows how the meaning of Italianness shifts among the interviewees depending on class affiliation: Among the middle-class offspring the use of the hyphen can be understood mainly as a reaction to the experienced pressure to give into Anglo conformity. Among the blue-collar, urban progeny Italianness expresses itself as a combination of an experienced ethnic environment on the one hand and a symbolic ethnicity on the other.

Keywords: migration; ethnicity; memory; class; Italian American; oral history

Introduction

In the mid-1980s migration scholar Rudolph Vecoli contemplated the future of the offspring of Italian migrants to the United States: 'But the fate of the third and even more the fourth generations remains problematic: Will they be finally absorbed into the anonymous American middle class bringing the saga of the Italian American immigration to an end?'[1] The saga lives on, as this article outlines: Americans of Italian ancestry continue to use hyphenated identities in the new millennium. These identities point to a history of lived ethnicity, as well as experienced prejudice.

Scholars of 'whiteness studies'[2] make a case that once racially ambivalent workers of Eastern and Southern European ancestry had claimed whiteness by the mid-1900. With the support from government programs which started during the 1930s as part of the New Deal, for example, the Wagner Act, Social Security Act, and Federal Housing Act, workers started to achieve social mobility. This New Deal legislation was mainly targeted toward white workers, not African Americans. This gave workers who prior to New Deal legislation might not have identified with whiteness, such as for example, Italians, Eastern European Jews or Greeks the incentive to organize themselves as whites.[3] After the war, workers profited from the GI Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act) which gave loans to veterans, mainly males, and much more likely white ones than black ones, to invest in a business, seek educational opportunities or to buy a house in the emerging suburbs.[4] As Jennifer Guglielmo writes: '[…] when white privilege and power became deeply institutionalized in the United States, […] Italian Americans began to organize more self-consciously as whites.'[5] Yet Donna Gabaccia contests whiteness studies

because they 'still leave us with the puzzle of hyphens.'[6] In other words: if Italians have become white over time, as whiteness scholars argue, then why does the offspring of Italian migrants to the United States still refer to themselves as Italian Americans? Matthew Frye Jacobson argues that people of European descent started to celebrate an ethnic revival in the 1960s by embracing their 'ethnic' roots after submerging into the melting pot of White Anglo Saxon Protestantism in the mid-20th century.[7] Several Italian Americans, Greek Americans, Jewish Americans, and others reacted to the societal success African Americans achieved in the 1960s and 1970s, erroneously believing that the advancement of blacks came at the expense of (working-class) whites.[8] For Jacobson, the reclaimed ethnic heritage as a response to the civil rights movement is, thus, just another manifestation of whiteness: 'Plymouth Rock whiteness' turned into 'Ellis Island whiteness' in the 1960s.[9] (A rock on the Massachusetts shore in Plymouth marks where pilgrim settlers first waded through the water to set foot on American soil.)

Mary Waters concludes on the basis of her interviews with descendants of European immigrants in the late 1980s that Americans chose Italianness as main ethnic identity over other possible ethnic identifications for themselves because it has the most ethnic feel to it, yet remains within the category of whiteness, thus Italianness provides one with an intriguing symbolic identity within the secure and privileged classification of whiteness.[10] (The census report of 2000 reveals how on average there are practically no socioeconomic differences between people who checked the Italian ancestry box on the report and the general American population.[11]) However, this article challenges the notion that the use of the hyphen in very recent history represents merely another expression of whiteness, but instead gives insight into the complex Italian American experience of both inclusion and discrimination. (It is also interesting to note that Americans of German ancestry are far less likely to use a hyphen since

World War I even though German Americanness also represents whiteness.[12]) Several studies of Italian ethnicity question the idea that later-generation Italian Americans have entered the 'twilight of ethnicity' [13] where ethnicity is merely a fancy, symbolic way of relating to the self, and suggest this form of hyphenated identity also has an authentic, lived, material basis.[14]

This study of three generations of descendants of Italian migrants to the United States demonstrates that among middle-class more suburban descendants that do not live in the ethnic neighborhood, Italian ethnicity has lost its 'authentic' roots which would be engrained in everyday life. Yet, the chosen hyphen in the identities among the suburban subjects points to a complex and painful history of experienced prejudice and Anglo conformity. In the case of blue-collar descendants Italianness still explains a social reality–though 'Italian practices' have weakened–which was influenced by societal discourses of Italianness that facilitate 'symbolic ethnicity'[15]. Herbert Gans describes 'symbolic ethnicity' as a way to relate to an ethnic past through symbolic actions as opposed to an ethnic life, which is engraved in every aspect of a person's life.[16] This study demonstrates how working-class Italianness is a combination of 'symbolic ethnicity' and a local social experience that is structured through ethnicity. This result of continued Italianness aligns itself with recent scholarship on later-generation Italian Americans.[17] The here presented research relies entirely on what people said and on how interviewees interpret their Italianness. These narrated experiences and interpretation of race and ethnicity are personal, yet also historically and socially formed.

Methodology

For this case study I interviewed and analysed interviews I conducted with 18 descendants[18] of a Southern Italian migrant couple with little means from Sava, Apulia. This migrant couple,

Elvira and Giovanni Soloperto, settled in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1913. The offspring of the Solopertos have developed into two family lines over the course of a century. One line (the 'Worcester line') represents members of the family who still reside in Worcester and are for the most part rooted in blue-collar culture. The other line (the 'separated line') left the once-ethnic neighbourhood of Worcester and has been living in and formed by middle-class culture. It was Elvira's and Giovanni's daughter Beatrice (born 1912) who left the ethnic Italian neighbourhood of Worcester in the 1930s and started the 'separated line.'[19] Currently, interviewees of the 'separated line' live across the United States and in one case in Switzerland. These related interviewed descendants present an interesting case study for Italian Americanness because they share the same migration history of their ancestors Elvira and Giovanni yet have evolved into a middle class and a working class branch in the past one hundred years. Thus, similarities and differences based on class—and generation—can be detected. Labor historians like Roy Rosenzweig, Gary Gerstle, Lizabeth Cohen, as well as Timothy Meagher mainly illuminate ethnic working class lives, but neglect the ethnic middle-class experience as well as later-generation descendants of migration.[20] In opposition, Russell Kazal illuminates how German identities were constructed differently among middle-class and working-class members in the 1920's in Philadelphia.[21] The here discussed study takes the aspects of both later generations and middle-class identities into account. Although the results of this micro-historical analysis cannot be applied to the broader population that can trace its roots to Italian migration, this study gives nuanced insight into memory formation, and inter-generational memory transmission in the realm of the topic ethnicity.[22] Illuminating conversations with people who are related to each other and are in contact with each other, as is the case in this study, enables one to draw connections between individual and collective memories[23] within the social group

of the family. To empirically entangle individual and collective memories is something that is still called for in recent scholarship on Maurice Halbwachs' idea of memory. [24].

Central to the analysis of Italianness in this article is the concept of generation which is understood here in the sense of Karl Mannheim's 'generation': It is not a biological unit, but is shaped by people who experienced similar events in their formative years.[25] Generation goes beyond an age group and entails collective characteristics of thinking, and feelings, as well as actions.[26] According to Mannheim it is during youth that people are shaped the most in terms of their outlook on life.[27] Therefore, oral history interviews can give insight into time periods that go far back in time. Some of the interlocutors I spoke with came of age in 1920s and 1930s and were thus historically shaped by those times.[28] These historically grown biographies then are the key to certain times and places that appear to be buried deep in the past, yet are accessible through the oral-history interviews.

The main focus of this article is to explore the interviewee's speech pertaining to ethnicity with the following questions: What is the interviewees' self-awareness pertaining to Italianness? How do the interviewees label themselves? Have they ever had experiences where they referred to themselves or were perceived as Italians, Italian Americans, or ethnic Americans? In what contexts have they become aware of society labelling them with ethnic terms? What motifs surface in their speech about Italianness?

This study started with an interview with Beatrice La Motta, the oldest interviewee and youngest Italian-born child of Elvira and Giovanni Soloperto. I then moved on to recording conversations with her children and grandchildren ('separated line'). Beatrice's offspring directed me to relatives who lived in Worcester with whom I was able to talk. I usually spoke to the potential interviewees on the phone first, telling them I was doing research on descendants

of Italian immigrants to the United States, and that I was particularly interested in their life stories. By revealing the research interest in advance, I laid the ground work to understand the interviewees as experts of their own lives and in that sense as informants to this project. The conducted interviews were based on Alexander von Plato's 'half-open narrative biographical interview'[29] as well as on the 'narrative Interview' of Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal/ Gabriele Rosenthal which both entail a basic structure of topics that the interviewer asks while leaving ample time and space for the informants to recall and structure their past experiences.[30]

The core of the research project is 34 interviews I conducted with the American descendants of Giovanni and Elvira Soloperto as well as with inhabitants of Sava and Bari.[31] The collected interview audio material is 41 hours long that I and in some cases a student transcribed into over 1160 transcript pages. The oral history transcripts were interpreted with a linguistic/narratological model inspired by Jan Kruse on the one hand and Gabriele Lucius-Hoene/ Arnulf Deppermann on the other to unravel the structure of collective mnemonic communities.[32]

The authors follow a bottom-up, inductive process of analysis; i.e., categories are a result of interpreting a text, not the starting point.[33] The interpretation of the interview is divided into two steps that reflect Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann's division into structure and microstructure. Taking the first step (Step I), I demarcated the entire transcript into several segments.[34] A segment is a paragraph that displays its own closed thematic, structural-functional, or linguistic formation.[35] In a second step (Step II), I completed an in-depth microstructural interpretation of the single segments.[36] For this microanalysis, I looked at linguistic-communicative phenomena similarly to the way Kruse suggests it.[37]

Within each segment attention is paid to the following events: 1) *Interaction*: What is the dynamic of the interview, how are the roles distributed, how are the social roles arranged?[38] 2) *Syntax:* What are the linguistic-grammatical particularities? For example, what pronouns are used? Is there direct speech?, etc. 3) *Semantic*: What is the lexis, what metaphors, metonyms, allegories, idioms, etc. are used?[39] Additionally, of every segment, I noted the *4) thematic/biographical (topic)* facts the speaker voices in the interview. 5) *Nonverbal communication*: My methodology goes beyond Kruse by giving additional significance to the paralinguistic and some nonvocal dimensions of a conversation.[40] Prosodic and paralinguistic cues are an indicator for personality traits, an emotional state, and regional and social group identities.[41]

From these five listed approaches, I derived the motifs of each segment. Kruse describes the motifs as linguistic pictures and models that are coherent with the individuals' subjective interpretations.[42] The motif basically answers the question of *what* is characteristic of the interview. The central motifs are symbolic figures that create a pattern throughout the transcript.[43] The motifs repeatedly surface on the levels of interaction, nonverbal communication, semantics, and syntax.[44] To be considered a motif, it must be able to be documented mainly on two of the analytical levels of syntax, semantics, and interaction, and nonverbal communication.[45] This basic thought of single linguistic phenomena relating to one another and from which meaning is derived stems from structuralism.[46] The motifs additionally are tied in with the overall of a conversation (Step I: Structure).

I developed a case study for every interviewee. It started with a description of the structure of speech (on the following pages, the words memory, speech, and utterances are used interchangeably, to reflect the intertwined nature of memory and language), and was continued

with a report on the microanalytical observations of the segments. To study the oral histories by the phenomena of their speech is incremental because every story has a "certain canonical form"[47] that it follows.[48] The reasoning behind this process was to reduce the data.[49] Most importantly, I collected motifs that derive from the empirical analysis of the segments. To finally grasp the collective memories of the descendants as groups, I constructed mnemonic types that derived from the single case structures.[50] In other words, I clustered interviewees who had similar motifs and patterns of memory. Furthermore, I compared the motif patterns between the family lines, generations, genders, locality, and class (college degree yes/no). The relevance of a motif depends on how frequently it appeared in the transcripts. The counting of motifs is what Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson refer to as "quasi-quantitative"[51] research:

The strength of the analysis method lies in its ability to detect linguistic-communicative patterns. The underlying premises of this method is that the interviewee makes semantic, syntactic, pragmatic, and nonverbal (prosodic and some body language) choices that are not arbitrary and that are intertwined with the larger structure of the conversation. It reflects the order of the mnemonic structures in the minds of the interviewees. In this article, the results of the interpretation of all segments that entail the topic of "Italianness" (ethnicity) are presented. It is in this sense and as mentioned above, the self-awareness of the informants in the realm of their ethnicity that are front and centre.[52]

The City of Worcester

Worcester had experienced a vast change from a predominantly Protestant Yankee farming community with its beginning in the early 1700s to a New England railroad hub by 1848. With the locomotive came an upswing in manufacturing which beckoned labourers from all over the

world. Worcester's population sextupled between 1848 and 1898 to over 100,000 inhabitants.[53] The explosion of inhabitants can partly be explained by the influx of Irish immigrants who were fleeing the famine of 1845-46 of their home country.[54] Several other immigrant groups followed shortly: The Protestant Swedes and the Catholic French-Canadians came by the thousands in the late nineteenth century. The very first few Italian immigrants in Worcester can be dated back to 1860 and 1875.[55] Most Italians, as well as other Catholics such as Polish and Lithuanians, populated Worcester between 1890 and 1920.[56] With 12,000 inhabitants, the Italians were the largest immigrant group of these newer immigrants.[57] The Italians created a vibrant Italian community around Shrewsbury Street and on the side streets of this main axis.[58] A miniscule Chinese community existed in the city at the time and the African Americans likewise formed a small, but growing unit.[59] Furthermore, Albanians, Armenians, Syrians, Greeks, Finns and Russian Jews added to the complex ethnic mix,[60] and made the once statistically strong ethnic group, the Irish, crumble to a mere 17 percent of the entire population by 1920.[61]

The immigrant labourers sought work in Worcester's metal and machine industries. The two industries combined were responsible for 40 per cent of the total production volume of Worcester.[62] Although Worcester emerged as a rapidly growing industrial city which integrated itself into a global capitalist economy, it never came close to Boston in terms of population and infrastructure.[63] In this thriving industrial period the Worcester Yankees held onto their strong grip on the economy.[64] Today, Worcester is struggling to find an identity in the new service and information economy. The city's post-industrial demise is visible in the abandoned factories and warehouses that are scattered across the city. However, new employers in education and in the health services, such as University of Massachusetts (UMass) Medical School and UMass

Memorial Healthcare, have come into the city and hired a substantial part of the Worcester labour force.[65]

Migration, Ethnicity, and Race in 20th-century America

Upon arriving in America the Soloperto family settled in Massachusetts—home to the founders of the Immigration Restriction League—at the height of xenophobic and nativist sentiments. In 1924 the scientific racially corroborated immigration law (Quota Act or Johnson-Reed Act) put a stop to Italian migration, after the 1921 Emergency Quota Act had already forestalled migration from Southern and Eastern Europe. The 'golden door' was henceforth shut in the face of Southern and Eastern Europeans newcomers because these latter, according to the 'scientific' racist theories of social Darwinism[66], were racially undesirable people and 'unfit for self-government,' unlike the descendants of the immigrants from the old 'Anglo-Saxon' stock.[67] These restrictive immigration laws in tandem with coerced Americanization during the Red Scare and beyond for those immigrants who were admitted resulted in a strengthening of American nationalism.[68] Finally, the execution of the Italian American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 signalled to the Italian community that American racism could potentially be deadly.[69] Southern and Eastern European migrants and their offspring were considered racially ambivalent until well into the 1930's. It was in this time period that these groups started to organize as 'whites' because mainly white workers profited from the New Deal welfare policies.[70]

Thomas Guglielmo makes a compelling argument that although Italians were perceived as racially unpopular in U.S. society, they nonetheless were 'white on arrival'[71]—meaning that Italian immigrants who entered the U.S. prior to the restrictions presented by the immigration

Quota Acts could, for example, apply for citizenship, have voting rights, and be on juries.[72] Cybelle Fox concludes: 'While southern and eastern European immigrants were deemed racially inferior to northern and western Europeans, they were nonetheless treated as white by most American institutions. And a variety of forces […] helped incorporate them into the polity as well as the welfare state.'[73] Although Italians received negative attitudes in the U.S. they were not reflected in laws prohibiting marriages or segregating neighborhoods, in opposition to the African American experience.[74] In 1964 the Civil Rights Act brought down the last vestiges of the Jim Crow system of segregation of African Americans. Although the anti-racist law did not mention migration, it contributed to the momentum that swept away the Quota Acts the following year. Nonetheless, immigration restrictions on European migration based on racial arguments survived from the 1920s until 1965. Ethnicity and hyphenated identities were, thus, a product of scientific racist discourses in the United States in which Italians were categorized as racially inferior.[75] Therefore, Italians and their offspring carried were, at least until the mid-1960s and at least in part, considered ethnically undesirable.

Multiculturalism emerged as the answer to the collapse of the scientific racism that had dominated the discourse for so long.[76] Racist logic and argumentation thus remained socially acceptable for this forty-year time period, of which both Beatrice La Motta and her sister-in-law Natalie Soloperto (both 2nd generation), as well as the third generation of descendants of Elvira and Giovanni Soloperto—Andrew La Motta, Sandra Meier, Antonella La Motta, Paul Martone, and Sara Hill—have very exact memories.

With the beginning of multiculturalism the 'ethno-racial pentagon' of African American, Native American, Euro-American, Asian American, and Latino was induced, as David Hollinger states, by government efforts during the 1960s and 1970s to make society more equal through

affirmative action programs. He argues that the multicultural movement adopted this categorization from which it celebrated cultural diversity.[77] Italian Americans are understood to have most finally and completely arrived as whites within the ethno-racial pentagon.[78]

The 'Separated Line': The Long Shadow of the Anglo-Saxon Myth[79]

Beatrice La Motta, the daughter of Elvira and Giovanni Soloperto, who emigrated from Southern Italy and grew up in Worcester, and studied English for a short time at Boston University, married her boyfriend in the midst of the Depression. He was the son of Southern-Italian immigrants from Chelsea, Massachusetts, and an engineer. She was working in the comptroller's office for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1941 the La Mottas exchanged the urban setting of Chelsea for very rural areas of New Hampshire: During the entire 1940s and over half of the 1950s they resided in Sandown, New Hampshire, and later in Pembroke, New Hampshire. It was not until 1957 that the family, which by that time had grown to a total of seven members, decided to move back to a more urban environment: For a decade the family lived in Concord, the capital of New Hampshire.[80] Beatrice never returned to the work force after becoming a mother. It was in Concord in a retirement home in the new millennium that then 90-year-old Beatrice described her Italianness[81] first and foremost in terms of the *motif* of *loss*.

> CW: What did you feel, how did you feel with your Italian background being in New Hampshire?
> BL: Ahm.
> CW: What was that like?
> BL: I don't know as I thought much about it. By that time Italy was <u>way</u> in the past.[82] [rules of transcription at the end of article]

In her chaotic daily life of raising five children,[83] her memories of and ties to Italy had become irrelevant as she emphasized. The ways she uses 'Italy' can also be understood, I argue, in terms

of loss of the Worcester Italian neighborhood: Not only was her native village in Italy a thing of the past, but she also experienced a break of ties in her Italian dialect-speaking[84] parents and environment. This speech of abrupt disconnection to her Worcester roots carried forward in her daughter Antonella's speech who recounted her mother being "dragged […] out of the Italian neighborhood" by her father.[85] The *motif* of *loss* in the realm of Italianness emerged in Beatrice's story-telling two more times.[86] Another *motif,* the *Anglo-Saxon standard,*[87] continuously resurfaced when she talked about Italianness—Beatrice: '[…] I was at the table with one woman who's […] English. I think the English, in my association the English appreciate the Italians and don't look down upon as some others would […]. They appreciate and love the accomplishments Italians have made.'[88] The woman referred to is an English lady who also resided in the assisted living facility. At another point in the interviewing process, Beatrice revealed how this friend whose 'background is English'[89] asked her one day at the dinner table what it was like to be 'Italian.'[90]

On the one hand, Beatrice's identity of Italianness in this passage is based on Italy as a nation. The 'lady' seemed to be a British national who approached Beatrice with the goal of having a conversation between two international people. Beatrice also presented her Italianness in terms of nationality during other parts of the interviewing process. My question had been 'Ahm just when you think about it, what is it like to be Italian American? Or an Italian in America?' I provided her with an option of either a hyphenated identity or 'Italian in America.' She opted for the former and called herself 'Italian'[91] and made the point of having been 'born there.'[92] Yet, Beatrice deviated from the concept of nationality in another instance during the interview when I asked her where she was from—she named the village, Sava, in Southern Italy. It is thus the *paese*[93] of Sava, as well as the spoken dialect 'leccese,'[94] which she also

mentioned in the context of speaking about her family, that constituted her identity.[95] Claiming this provincial identity, a sub-national sense of affiliation referred to as *campanilismo,*[96] is representative for Italian immigrants who arrived at the turn of the last century. After the *Risorgimento*, the unification of 1861, the Italian nation was by no means a concept that was unequivocally embraced by its inhabitants. In the time period when Beatrice and her family embarked on a steamship at Naples in 1913, provincial identities, such as 'leccese' in her case, were preferred over the national one.[97]

On the other hand, the common dinner of the two retirees happened within a national American context, which gives evidence of a certain historical complexity concerning the terms 'English' and 'Italian.' This complexity of meaning can be explained by the U.S. history of turning nationalities into ethnicities that started in the late nineteenth century when large numbers of immigrants from Germany, Britain, and Ireland,[98] as well as from Southern, Eastern, and Eastern Europe entered the eastern ports of the U.S., while in the western part of the U.S. people from Asia[99] and Mexico arrived.[100] Hence, 'English' and 'Italian' carry the connotation of 'ethnicity,' which in turn comes with a history of scientific racism.[101] Scientific racists and their followers judged newcomers from Southern Italy, among other places, incapable of upholding their high standard of civility. This interpretation of Englishness in the American context of the emergence of ethnicity can be found in Beatrice's speech. It becomes evident that my interview partner's self-worth was influenced by the English/Anglo-Saxon opinion (*motif Anglo-Saxon standard*). It is the Anglo-Saxon standard that Beatrice has to achieve. Her use of the preposition 'down' in '[…] English appreciate the Italians and don't look down upon them like others would' makes her perceived hierarchy between groups obvious, while it also betrays a feeling of inferiority connected to the Italian American identity.

It is telling how Beatrice revealed to me with a sense of pride how the English lady '[…] chose to sit with me […]' at the dinner table in the retirement home.[102] This was a moment to be cherished for Beatrice, since, as Harney suggests provocatively, 'Italophobia is an English-speaking malady.'[103] Beatrice's concern about the Anglo-Saxon standard has its roots in the rise of social Darwinism in the late nineteenth century. Although this racial discourse was most prevalent around nineteen hundred, it had long-term consequences. The Quota Act of 1924, which resulted from trickled-down scientific racist discourses, was in force until 1965.[104] By that time Beatrice La Motta was 53 years old. Racism as a federal policy, therefore, was a socially accepted argument for regulating people who wanted to enter the country.

The people identified by the interviewees as the 'White Anglo-Saxon Protestants,' the WASPs, remained the most influential group in the United States until the earth-shaking upheavals of the 1960s reorganized the demographic, political, and institutional landscape that led to what Eric Kaufman called the 'Decline of Anglo-America.'[105] The Vietnam War, into which the Anglo-American leaders had dragged the nation, caused the loss of their moral credibility.[106] To Beatrice, the importance of following the norms set by the elite white Protestant group was still imperative in the new millennium.

The prevalence of the *motif Anglo-Saxon standard* carried on to the next generation—as can also be seen in the remarks of her children Andrew and Sandra. Andrew (3rd generation) was born in New Hampshire in 1944. He graduated from Concord Senior High School and enrolled at the University of New Hampshire where he earned a bachelor's degree.[107] He later went on to medical school in the Midwest. At the time of the interviews, 59-year old Andrew worked as a physician in his own practice in Massachusetts.

> AL: I'm not a typical Italian, Italian American 'cause uh, I grew up in, um, Yankee environment which was basically white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. (…) And ahm, most Italians grow up in an Italian ghetto.

> Like, ahm, like Worcester or Providence or Fall River, you know East Boston, that sort of thing. And ah, and I didn't. So my story is (...) is that of an Italian American in a WASP, in WASPish communities.[108]

Andrew's very first disclaimer: 'I'm not a typical Italian […]'is not an uncommon response. Often the offspring of Italian immigrants feel that they do not fit into some kind of–often medially disseminated–prototype for Italianness. Di Leonardo's interviews, which she conducted in the early 1980's, resonate with the experience I had when interviewing descendants of Italian immigrants. Micaela Di Leonardo asked Gino Angeluzzi, an interviewee, what he thought about Italian Americans. His response: 'Sometimes it's a little hard for me to say because as kids we didn't live in an Italian community.'[109] This feeling of not belonging is characteristic of Andrew La Motta's memories. In this introductory passage, he summarized his life story, which still holds true today, as signified by the simple present ('My story is (….) is that […].') . Right from the beginning, Andrew's self-identification as an outsider became relevant. It is a position he maintained consistently throughout his biographical reminiscing. In spite of not having been raised in a New England Italian community, like Worcester, Providence or Fall River, he identified himself as Italian American, which is something he repeated in our second conversation two days later: I asked: 'Well, for, well I wanna talk more now about ahm, yah, the, the heritage. How would, how would you label yourself? Your identity as…' Andrew replied: 'Well, I think I consider myself as a, an Italian American.'[110] By putting stress on two nouns in the introductory segment, 'Protestants' and ' ghetto', he carved out two opposites, on an ethnic continuum: The 'ghetto'—or Italian community—is where most Italian Americans experienced their childhood, whereas Andrew came of age on the opposite spectrum in a 'Yankee environment'. Not any fewer than five different terms came to his mind—'Yankee', 'White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant' and 'WASP'—to get to the ethnic core of his world as a

youth. It is the repetition of one phenomenon spoken in so many words that leads me to using the *motif Anglo-Saxon standard.*

WASPness in Andrew's memory seemed all-pervasive. The following quotes further reveal how in his mind the WASPs not only represent an ethnic category but also a class category:

> AL: And also the (...) ahm, com, you know the community of those and ahm, there was kind of an elite group of (...) people. (long pause) Ahm, mostly mothers of girls who wanted to be sure that their girls (...) hung around with the right guys. And so they would stage parties.
> CW: The mothers would stage parties?
> AL: Yeah. And invite, invite guys. But they had to be in the right social group. (AL gets up goes into the kitchen, speaks from there). Well, my parents were (...) you know not from the privileged class.
> CW: Which was what?
> AL: Well, I mean WASP. WASP class. Ahm, you know they were Italian immigrants. (Eats). So I think it was just assumed that we didn't fit. And ahm but I don't know, I think I asked to get invited to these things [the parties, CW]. And then they, ahm, I think probably the request went to the mothers and then mothers considered it and they looked at where I lived in town, what kinda house I had, what was the educational background of my parents, what was the occu…, profession of my father, and what was my academic standing in class. And I was generally in the top, top group or, or the second from the top group in every subject. And ahm, and I was a good student. So they said: 'Well, alright.' So they invited me to a few of these things. You know dances, and, they're actually dinner dances, as I remember. So we had to invite a girl.[111]

Academic excellence was the way Andrew was able to secure a ticket to this privileged "elite group." As an Italian American it was an ongoing struggle in unfriendly surroundings. Similiarly to Andrew, writer and scholar Jerre Mangione, who was born in 1909, remembers how he was faced with potential Italophobia of the women he was dating and their parents as a youngster in Rochester, New York.[112]

The *Anglo-Saxon standard* as *motif* in terms of creating a scale of difference surfaced repeatedly when Andrew spoke about WASPness, as seen in the above quote—'WASP-class'—as well as in the following quote: 'And the Protestant kids were the higher socioeconomic intellectual academic [group].'[113] He spoke about WASPs in tandem with social strata. The scale is composed of vocabulary about social class and marked by the word 'higher.' He construed himself as an outsider while remembering the instances when he came in contact with

this other class, which was basically on a daily basis, particularly during the years when he attended high school in Concord. The painful experience of wanting to belong, yet being rejected by the 'WASP-class' unveils itself vividly through the interviews.[114]

Andrew's sister, Sandra Meier (3rd generation), too, shared speech of 'WASPs,' 'Yankees,' 'English settlers,' 'upper-class white,' and 'Anglo-Saxon.'[115] Sandra was born in 1943 in New Hampshire. She received her B.A. at the University of New Hampshire, as did all her siblings. After college she spent a year abroad studying at the Sorbonne in Paris where she met her future husband, a Swiss student. Eventually, the two moved in together in Switzerland and married in the early 1970s. Sandra and her husband raised two children while she worked as an English teacher, and taught until her retirement. She still lives in Switzerland.[116] Sandra and Andrew were the most active creators of the *Anglo-Saxon standard motif*[117]. To Sandra, the orientation towards the WASPs (*motif Anglo-Saxon standard*) lay at the heart of her understanding of what it means to be Italian. It is, in this sense, a negative identity. This argument finds further evidence when considering another frequently voiced *motif* of *victimhood*[118]. Together *Anglo-Saxon standard* and *victimhood* made up nearly half of her mentioned *motifs* when revealing her thoughts about Italianness—it is a deficit in contrast to the WASPs. For example, Sandra went back to her childhood perspective to make a statement about the way she saw her family: 'I really had the feeling there was something special about us or different. I didn't feel happy about it. I wanted to be a Yankee. More American.'[119] Sandra's *motif* of the *Anglo-Saxons* who set the standard the Italian Americans have to abide by is expressed in a stratum 'More American'. Not until later in her life did she sometimes feel proud of her Italian heritage, and use the hyphen.

This change over time from self-conscious Italian American to a person who celebrates her ethnic heritage most likely can be explained as a product of the 1960s when the relevant institutions of U.S. life started to experience an 'ethnic revival' within the climate of multiculturalism.[120] Although Andrew and Sandra belong to the generation[121] that was shaped most by the U.S. consensus and Anglo conformity of the 1950s, there are some discursive influences of the civil rights movement, multiculturalism, and the 'ethnic revival' that resonate in Andrew's and Sandra's memories. Therefore, the hyphen used by Sandra and Andrew conveys a sense of ethnic-revival pride as a band aid to cover up the wounds caused by exclusion from an Anglo-conform society as experienced prior to the 1960s and beyond. Reclaiming the Italian American label and giving it a positive connotation was a way to turn the shame over societal discrimination into ethnic pride.

Fourth generation 'separated' Karen Cordeiro (born 1961), Andrew's and Sandra's niece, whom I interviewed in her home in New Hampshire, produced similar *motifs* in her memories. At the time Karen was born in the early 1960's her parents lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts because her father was in the engineering program at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Her mother, Heather who is the oldest sibling to Sandra and Andrew has a law degree. As a young child the family moved to New Hampshire where Karen graduated from high school and then continued her education at the University of New Hampshire. Today, Karen is a community college professor in New Hampshire. At the time of the interview her two children were attending high school. Within the first five minutes of the conversation and without me guiding her in any direction, Karen remarks:

> KC: […] but one of the things for my parents, I think success was defined as membership in the country club which w…, they had. Ahm, playing golf, playing tennis, having that kind of….that for them was you've reached a level of success if you have that. And if you have that membership into that kinda almost that *old* almost WASP…

CW: Ok.
KC: kind of…both of my parents were very, that was a very part of, for them, wanted that for their children.[122]

One of Cordeiro's parents' main goals, or at least in the case of her mother, seems to have been 'becoming old-stock'[123] and attaining membership in elite clubs by playing sports and having hobbies that are understood to be upper-class white. Karen's father '[…] was a Yankee to the core: Just an old-time, flinty, frugal Yankee.'[124] Karen reports how her father, who has passed away, documented his genealogy, in which he could trace his family to early English settlers. There even is a road in a small New Hampshire village which carries the family's surname. For both parents, it seems, success was defined by being a WASP. Karen stated: 'My mother had no interest being Italian. It was almost like, she was almost embarrassed. There was no tradition in our house. […] It was never a point of pride in my house. My mother rejected Italian because she was a WASP. The anti-thesis to Italian (…) ghetto or whatever…'[125]

As seen, Karen carried forward the memory of WASPness, yet in a critical manner. She rejected her mother's striving for societal success by taking on a WASP-identity. Instead, Karen made her Italianness a cornerstone of her identity: She reads books on Italian-American history, learned from her grandmother, Beatrice La Motta, and from cookbooks how to prepare Italian meals, and raises her children with an Italian-American awareness. Moreover, just three years before the interview, Karen, together with her teenage children James and Katherine, converted from Unitarianism, the tradition she was raised in, to Roman-Catholicism—the religion her grandmother practiced. Her identification with Italianness, thus, can be understood as a reclaiming of ethnic pride in the context of a multiculturalism as a ruling concept after her mother had completely assimilated to WASPness in the 1950s. The 1950s marked a time of American political consensus as a response to the communist threat and stemming from a belief

in a cohesive society, which was still far away from a multicultural understanding of the self.[126] The fourth-generation cousins who grew up during the 1970s and 1980s display a multitude of self-identifications: Some, as in Karen's case, embrace the hyphen while others do not affiliate with their ethnic heritage at all. Fourth-generation member Sabina, born and raised in Contoocook, New Hampshire, and at the time of the interview a Smith College student, did not share the family mnemonic *motif* of *Anglo-Saxonism*. Already her mother, Antonella, appeared unfazed by her siblings need for a WASP identity—due, I argue, to being born later and hence part of a generation that was strongly shaped by the counterculture of the 1960s. Antonella enrolled at college in 1965, at the height of the civil rights movement.[127] Her daughter Sabina's Italianness was strongly linked to Antonella's speaking of and performing Italianness in the sense of cooking Italian food, or speaking about Italian culture and language, albeit in an abstract symbolic manner;[128] never was there talk, so Sabina said, of relatives in the 'homeland'. It was more through her grandmother who told her about family members in Italy that Sabina felt like there was a "genuine" connection to Southern Italy. In this sense it is her grandmother, Beatrice La Motta, who holds the key to "real" Italianness.[129]

Thus, the sources of the multitude of identification possibilities displayed in this fourth generation can be found in the 1960s and 1970s when increased inclusion of minorities and women made possible different identities and lives.[130]

The 'Worcester Line': Feeling Italian

WASPness is of no concern to the 'Worcester line.' Protestantism, and Anglo-Saxonism, never found their way into our conversations. Natalie Soloperto's, Sara Hill's, Paul, Matt, and Philip Martone's, and Anne Caulfield's sense of Italianness is echoed in the *motif* of *feeling*[131]. Natalie Soloperto was born in 1918 in the city of Worcester where she has been living all of her life to

the parents of Italian immigrants from Pontecorvo, a city about 125 km southwest of Rome in the Provence of Frosinone. The father's occupation in Italy was glass blower. Unlike her father, her mother was illiterate and never had any schooling in the home country. Natalie completed eight years of public schooling before dropping out to start a job in a coat manufacturing factory in Worcester where she worked all her life until retirement. She married Dan, one of Elvira's and Giovanni's sons, who owned a grocery store in Worcester.[132] For 85-year old Natalie this *motif* of *feeling* manifested itself as a pride of being Italian.[133] This was not a feeling of superiority, but a 'horizontal' identity—Italian American is one among several equal ethnicities: CW: 'Did you ever feel different as Italian?' Natalie: 'No, why should I? No, I'm proud I'm an Italian (laughs). […] You feel everybody's the same. 'Hey you, so you're Swedish? I'm Italian.' As long as you get along.'[134] Possibly, the inquiry appeared quite peculiar to her, since she answered with a clear rejection as well as a counter-question. Italian was the most normal thing to her, which is why she thought the question not only absurd, but humorous. The pronoun 'we' additionally confirmed her understanding of Italianness as a collective experience that is lived the same way though in a different form. Mentioning the Swedes is not a coincidence. The Swedes were an integral part of the ethnic composition of Worcester in the first half of the twentieth century.[135] Italianness as *feeling* also emerged as the single most important *motif* for third generation Sara Hill (born 1936) who graduated high school and then became the mother of three children.[136] In the past she made a part-time income in a department store and at the time of the interview she worked as the client services co-ordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association.[137] Sara's brother Paul, a fire fighter, as well as her daughter Anne (born 1958, 4th generation), cast their Italianness through the *motif* of *feeling*, albeit the emotions were not as salient as they were with Sara.[138] Italianness as a *feeling* surfaced repeatedly in the

conversations with Anne's firefighting cousins Philip and Matt (born 1965/1963, 4th generation).[139] 44-year old Matt attended a trade school, the same vocational school that his middle son was attending at the time of the interview. After graduating at the age of 18, Matt started working as a plumber; he continued in that line of work and today, as a master plumber, owns his own company. He had also had joined the Worcester Fire Department, but had to go into early retirement after an accident at a fire had left him injured. Matt is the father of four sons.

His brother Philip, the father of two, graduated from the Rhode Island Art School of Design and then returned to Worcester to join his father and brother Matt at the Worcester Fire Department. Ethnicity as a horizontal identity emerged in Philip's memories: '[...] if you look at the city of Worcester: Italians lived over here (points to one side of the table), and Polish lived over here (points to other side of table), Swedish lived over here (points), French lived over here [...].'[140] Ethnics, in the understanding of Philip, are groups of people who live equally side by side. Not only was there absolutely no trace of WASPness, the interviewees of Worcester, moreover, did not produce the *motif* of *victimhood* in relation to the Anglo-Saxons.

Neighbourhood and *community* representing their ethnic immediate material surroundings emerged as two closely related *motifs* that were frequently expressed in the 'Worcester line' when creating speech on the topic Italianness.[141] And particularly, the *motif* of *neighbourhood*[142] was expressed through a Worcester Shrewsbury Street Italian identity. Philip said: '[…] how can I say, I don't think life, it's awful now that I look at the last three generations, if you look at my grandparents, my parents and my brothers and I, we all grew up within, I should say on the same block. If you think of Shrewsbury Street. Shrewsbury Street was the Italian district.'[143] The different people of the changing generations lived within this

one area; Shrewsbury Street represented the quintessential spot of Italianness from which one can orient oneself. With a further *motif*, the *world*, the Worcester interview partners saw their entire world and surroundings through the lens of Italianness.[144] *Mannerism*[145] and additionally *appearance*[146] materialized within the fourth generation of the Worcester interviewees. Matt cherished his Italian identity as did his sons:

> MM: I mean my kids (…) love to talk about that they're Italian.
> CW: You tell them?
> MM: My kids love to tell all their friends that they're Italian.
> CW: Ah.
> MM: If their friends are not Italian, they give them a hard time.
> CW: Why is that?
> MM: Cause they, they it's li...(…) ah, they like to show ahm, their nationality like, like ah one of their friends is Italian, but he looks like all white skin.
> CW: Yeah.
> MM: He looks Irish. So I give'em a hard time.[147]

The verbs in the above segment display how Italianness is to talk, tell, and show (*motif mannerism*). In additional segments Matt also used the verb "to speak" and "to talk" in terms of Italianness.[148] Furthermore, Italianness is "the way I move" and "the way I talk."[149] Matt talked the talk and walked the walk in order to show his Italianness. In his book "Feeling Italian: The Art of Ethnicity" Thomas J. Ferraro refers to "*acting* (originally cursive) Italian […] as an art *for* America (originally cursive)."[150] It is, in this sense, a performance of identity within an American context and for an American audience. This performance is similar to what Gans brands "symbolic ethnicity."

Conclusion

The ethnicity of the 'Worcester line' presents itself as a combination of a material, lived reality in the Shrewsbury Street neighbourhoods (*world, neighbourhood, community*) and a 'symbolic

identity'—a way to relate to an ethnic past through symbolic actions, the way Gans described it.[151] This 'symbolic identity' is expressed through the *motifs feeling, mannerism, and appearance* in the interviews. However, the 'Worcester line' *feeling*, or 'symbolic ethnicity,' was overlaid with a local social/ethnic experience. Although the Worcester interviewees were not active in any Italian clubs, they described most of their friends, their clients, and the neighbourhood as mainly Italian American *(world, neighbourhood, community)*. Italianness, thus, penetrated their everyday life and went beyond the symbolic and into the experienced reality.

The description in the interviews of the urban Worcester neighbourhood as being ethnic in the new millennium makes a case for continued Italianness: Not all white ethnics left the urban environments after World War II,in spite of the GI Bill encouraging ethnic veterans after World War II to leave the cities and move to the suburbs.[152] Although, the Soloperto offspring profited from the New Deal programs and Lyndon B. Johnson's Medicare and Medicare programs, they did not take advantage of the GI Bill or Federal Housing programs–the house they purchased in the early 1950s in East Worcester which has given a home to several generations of Solopertos was bought by means of pooling money among family and friends. This result resonates with further scholarship: Many working class GI's did not take advantage of the GI Bill or the housing programs. Also only a few Italian American veterans took advantage of the education opportunity the GI Bill of Rights promised.[153]

Symbolic ethnicity also finds an outlet in the separated line, as shown by the case of Smith College student Sabina reminiscing about her mother's performance of Italianness. In general, in the 'separated line,' 'the boundary work'[154] between them as Italian Americans and the Anglo-Saxon Protestant group is a pivotal element in this family's understanding of itself.

An ongoing negotiation of this boundary line between Italianness and WASPness lies at the core of their collective memories. It seems as if the discourse of scientific racism and Anglo conformity, remains engrained in the memories of the family members who left Worcester in the 1930's. It also becomes apparent that Italianness among the 'separated line' was a product of social mobility and hierarchies. Nonetheless, these same third-generation members label themselves Italian Americans in the interviews. This, most likely, results from the experienced 'ethnic revival' of the 1960s during the dawn of multiculturalism after which a newly-installed pride remedied the prior experienced social discrimination.

Notes

[1] Vecoli, 'Search for an Italian American Identity', 88–112.

[2] Most influential in whiteness studies: Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*. For historiography on whiteness studies within the field of Italian-American studies consult: Luconi, "Whiteness and Ethnicity", 146–63.

[3] Guglielmo, "Introduction," 12; Guglielmo, *White on Arrival*.

[4] Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, 137; Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, Chap. 7; for the Italian-American case of moving to suburbia see: Vecoli, "Negli Stati Uniti," 81; Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 239.

[5] Guglielmo, "Introduction," 12.

[6] Gabaccia, "Race, Nation, Hyphen," 59.

[7] Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 2.

[8] Guglielmo, "Introduction," 13.

[9] Ibid., 7, 9, 41, 60, 69, 205.

[10] Waters, *Ethnic Options*, 31–34, 142.

[11] These results stem from Egelman who looked at, among other categories, education, earnings, and occupation in order to make conclusions about the socioeconomic level of people of Italian ancestry. See Egelman, "Italian Americans," 19.

[12] On the submergence of German Americans into the American mainstream see: Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, introduction.

[13] Alba, *Italian Americans*.

[14] Authors who make the salience point in relation to Italianness: Capozzoli, *Three Generations of Italian American Women*, 261; Alessandria, *Ethnic Identity*; Axt, *Composite of Complexity*, Stanger-Ross in *Staying Italian* states that social experience in South Philadelphia's neighborhood was organized along Italian ethnic lines well beyond World War II. Stanger-Ross studies residential patterns, real estate transactions, religious participation, marriage choices, and labor force participation to come to this conclusion; for continuity see also: Boscia-Mulè, *Authentic Ethnicities*;

Tamburri, "Foreword," 7−9; Vecoli, "Are Italian Americans Just White Folks?," 149−161; Gambino, "Are Italian Americans in the 'Twilight of Ethnicity' or a New Dawn?", 161−174.

[15] Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity," 420.

[16] Ibid.

[17] see footnote 14.

[18] The interviewees' names have been changed.

[19] See family tree at the end of article.

[20] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 6; Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, Gerstle, *Liberty*; Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*.

[21] Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, Chapters 11 and 12.

[22] For micro history see: Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*.

[23] Halbwachs, *Das kollektive Gedächtnis*.

[24] See for example Kisiel, *Review of Kattago*. I myself am a descendant of Giovanni and Elvira's—I am the granddaughter of Beatrice La Motta. I had met some of my informants prior to this research project while others I met for the first time when contacting them in the context of this research project. My status as an insider on the basis of kinship while simultaneously as an outsider as a historian conducting interviews is discussed in my forthcoming book *Memories of Belonging* at greater length, as is the way 'kinship' was established within the interview between my informants and me.

[25] Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," 292–303; see also Olick/Robbins, "Social Memory Studies," 123.

[26] Jureit/Wildt, "Generationen," 9f.

[27] Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," 292–303.

[28] One interviewee was born in 1912 the other one in 1918.

[29] Von Plato, "Zeitzeugen und historische Zunft," 21f.

[30] Fischer-Rosenthal/Rosenthal, "Warum Biographieanalyse," 414−418.

[31] For more information on methodology of this study consult: *Memories of Belonging*.

[32] Kruse, *Reader*; Lucius-Hoene/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*.

[33] Kruse, *Reader*, 194; Lucius-Hoene/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 96. The methodological foundation of inductive, reconstructive interpretation methods is Glaser, Strauss and Corbin's 1960 developed "Grounded Theory," see Glaser/Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.

[34] Lucius-Hone/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 109–176, other than Lucius-Hone/Deppermann I do not take "perspective of the narration" ("Erzählperspektive") into account see Lucius-Hone/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 136–140.

[35] Glinka, *Das narrative Interview,* 148.

[36] Lucius-Hone/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 177–290.

[37] Kruse, *Reader*, 2009, 172.

[38] Lucius-Hone/Deppermann, *Rekonstruktion narrativer Identität*, 136–140.

[39] Kruse, *Reader*, 2009, 153.

[40] Finch, *How to Study Linguistics*, 222.

[41] Scherer, Klaus R. *Personality Markers in Speech*, 147f.

[42] Kruse, *Reader*, 156.

[43] Ibid.

[44] See Kruse's matrix of analysis: Kruse, *Reader*, 214.

[45] Ibid., 95f. Kruse however, does not consider the nonverbal communication level for his analysis.

[46] Linde, *Working*, 46.

[47] Tondera, "Die gespaltene Erinnerung," 163.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Coffey/Atkinson, *Making Sense*, 28.

[50] Kruse calls this process "Typenbildung," see Kruse, *Reader*, 218.

[51] Coffey/Atkinson, *Making Sense*, 28.

[52] For interpretation of further results pertaining to, for example, religion, food, family, consult: *Memories of Belonging*.

[53] Southwick, *150 Years of Worcester*.

[54] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 23; Southwick, *150 Years of Worcester*.

[55] Capuano, *A Brief History*.

[56] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 15, Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 29.

[57] Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 29.

[58] Capuano, *A Brief History*; Thompson, *Cultural Ties*, 147.

[59] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 15.

[60] Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 29.

[61] Cohen, "Ethnic Catholicism," 147.

[62] Brown, *Massachusetts*.

[63] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 20.

[64] Ibid., 16.

[65] DelSignore, *The Office of the City*.

[66] On social Darwinism Gabaccia states: '[…] the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* [italic in original] sparked international debates among the scientific racists we now usually call social Darwinists in the English-speaking world […].' In: Gabaccia, "Race, Nation, Hyphen," 51; the book *The Origin of Species* was very popular in the United States upon its publication. Many of Darwin's ideas were vulgarly applied to society in order to create stratification based on pseudoscientific arguments. Particularly the American philosopher John Fiske was one of the main proponents to promote Anglo-Saxonism through social Darwinism. In his writings of the second half of the 19th century he combined evolutionism with U.S. expansion and the Anglo-Saxon cult, see Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism*, 176.

[67] Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*; see also Gabaccia, "Race, Nation, Hyphen", 55–56.

[68] Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans," 556.

[69] Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution*, 200.

[70] Guglielmo, "Introduction," 12f., Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 33.

[71] The quote is taken from Thomas Guglielmo's book title: "White on Arrival." Guglielmo uses the phrase to discuss the experience of Italian immigrants in Chicago: Guglielmo, *White on Arrival*.

[72] Guglielmo, "Introduction," 11; Jacobson, *Whiteness*, 57.

[73] Fox, *Three Worlds.*

[74] Ibid.

[75] Gabaccia, "Race, Nation".

[76] Gabaccia, *Immigration and American Diversit*y, 222.

[77] Hollinger, *Postethnic America*, 8.

[78] Ibid., 41.

[79] Inspired by a title in Kaufmann's book: Kaufmann, *Rise and Fall of Anglo-America*. Title in book: *Reinterpreting the Anglo-Saxon Myth*, 30.

[80] La Motta, *List of birthdays*, La Motta, *List of locations of residence*.

[81] Total number of motifs of all interviewees pertaining to topic Italianness n=212. For the suburban group: n=102. For the "Worcester group" n=100. Per person: Andrew La Motta n=8, Anne Caulfield n=13, Antonella La Motta n=11, Beatrice La Motta n=9, David Collia n=13, Matt Martone n=21, Natalie Soloperto n=11, Paul Martone n=6, Philip Martone n= 50, Sabina La Motta-Buchanan n=28, Sandra Meier n=17, Simon Collia n=16, Sara Hill n=9. (For pragmatic reasons Karen Cordeiro's interview was not micro analysed looking for motifs.) Although the total of motif use is not equally distributed, they are nonetheless comparable in order to give an understanding of the collective mnemonic motifs pertaining to the topic of Italianness. The motifs, however, are not interpreted as rigid statistics, but as patterns of motifs: In their synoptic overview of the different forms of qualitative research, Coffey and Atkinson emphasize the importance of finding patterns in the written data. Coffey/Atkinson, *Making Sense*, 10.

[82] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 30, 2002, 92.

[83] Her daughter, Antonella La Motta, depicts the family life in Sandown and Pembroke as confusing, and chaotic. She remembers how there were many quarrels among her siblings. Interview Antonella La Motta, 2002, 7.

[84] Beatrice still speaks the dialect, however, her children and grandchildren do not speak the dialect, and if they speak some Italian it is because they took classes and learned it as adults.

[85] Interview Antonella La Motta, 2002, 43.

[86] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 28, 2002, 65; Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 30, 2002, 103f.

[87] I named this motif on the basis of Jacobson's use of the "Anglo-Saxon standard" see: Jacobson, *Roots Too*, 2.

[88] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 28, 2002, 66.

[89] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 30, 2002, 93.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 65.

[92] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 28, 2002, 65.

[93] The village.

[94] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 28, 2002, 36.

[95] Ibid., 35–36. Today Sava belongs to the province of Taranto.

[96] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, 34; Manconi, "Campanilismo," 36–42.

[97] Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere?," 1116.

[98] Immigrants from these three nationalities had been already entering the U.S. throughout the nineteenth century in large numbers. See: Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 173.

[99] The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 stopped Asian laborers from entering the United States.

[100] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 2007, 173; for an overview of the history and research on Italians and Race in America consult Luconi, *From Paesani to White Ethnics*, 1–14.

[101] Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny,* 4.

[102] Interview Beatrice La Motta, December 30, 2002, 93.

[103] Harney, "Italophobia," 54–59.

[104] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, 341.

[105] Kaufman, *Rise and Fall*, 207

[106] Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 2.

[107] Interview Andrew La Motta, January 4, 2003, 58.

[108] Interview Andrew La Motta, January 2, 2003, 1.

[109] Di Leonardo, *Varieties of Ethnic Experience*, 181.

[110] Interview Andrew La Motta, January 4, 2003, 51.

[111] Ibid., 23f.

[112] Mangione, Jerre. An Ethnic at Large: A Memoir of America in the Thirties and Forties. New York 1978.

[113] Interview Andrew La Motta, January 4, 2003, 33–34.

[114] Interview Andrew La Motta, January 2, 2003; Interview Andrew La Motta, January 4, 2003.

[115] Interview Sandra Meier, June 2, 2003, 24–25; Interview Sandra Meier, June 11, 2003, 28–29, 32.

[116] Interview Sandra Meier, June 2, 2003. Sandra Meier is my mother.

[117] Interview Sandra Meier, June 2, 2003, 24, 24–25; Interview Sandra Meier, June 11, 2003, 38–39; Interview Andrew La Motta, January 2, 2003, 1; Interview Andrew La Motta, January 4, 2003, 20–21, 23–24, 33–34, 51–52.

[118] Interview Sandra Meier, June 2, 2003, 23–24; Interview Sandra Meier, June 11, 2003, 37, 39–40.

[119] Interview Sandra Meier, June 2, 2003, 24.

[120] Jacobson, *Roots Too,* 4, 67.

[121] Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*.

[122] Interview Karen Cordeiro, 2010.

[123] This phrase is borrowed from Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*.

[124] Interview Karen Cordeiro, 2010.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Heale, *American Anticommunism*.

[127] Interview Antonella La Motta, December 28, 2002, 47.

[128] Interview Sabina La Motta-Buchanan, September 30, 2007, 2f., 8, 8f.

[129] Ibid., 4.

[130] Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*, 10.

[131] See also title of Ferraro, *Feeling Italian.* For *motif feeling* for topic Italianness among Worcester branch n=17.

[132] Interview Natalie Soloperto, 2003,

[133] *Motif feeling*: Interview Natalie Soloperto, 2003, 88, 89.

[134] Ibid., 88.

[135] Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 286.

[136] *Motif feeling*: Interview Sara Hill, 2003, 47, 15–, 43–44, 44–45, 46–47.

[137] Interview Sara Hill, 2003, 15–16, 43–44, 44–45, 46–47.

[138] Interview Paul Martone, 2003, 63–64, Interview Anne Caulfield, 2007, 20, 21. 23.

[139] Interview Philip Martone, 2007, 5–6, 28, 35, 96–97, 105–106; Interview Matt Martone, 2007, 70–71, 84, 90.

[140] Interview Philip Martone 2007, 6.

[141] Interview Philip Martone, 2007, 35–36, 66–67; Interview Anne Caulfield, 2007, 96–97, Interview Sara Hill, 2003, 40–41, Interview Matt Martone, 2007, 54; Interview Paul Martone, 2003, 20–21.

[142] Interview Natalie Soloperto, 2003, 61–62, 87, Interview Philip Martone, 6, 9–10, 8–9, 18–19, 20–23, 29–30, 36, 39, 69–70, 76–77, 95–96. Interview Matt Martone, 2007, 48–49, 54, 66–67.

[143] Interview Philip Martone, 2007, 18–19.

[144] Interview Matt Martone, 2007, 26–27, 52–53, 67–68, 71; Interview Paul Martone 2003, 11–12; Interview Anne Caulfield 2007, 82–83.

[145] Interview Philip Martone, August 28, 2007, 39, 39f., 41f.; Interview Matt Martone, August 28, 2007, 24, 44f., 70, 81f.

[146] Interview Philip Martone, August 28, 2007, 5.; Interview Matt Martone, August 28, 2007, 81f., Interview Anne Caulfield, October 10, 2007, 7f., 93f.

[147] Interview Matt Martone, August 28, 2007, 24.

[148] Ibid., 15f., 25, 81.

[149] Ibid., 82.

[150] Ferraro, *Feeling Italian*, 7.

[151] Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity," 420.

[152] Mormino, "It's Not Personal," 15.

[153] Mormino/Pozzetta, "Italian Americans, 149f.

[154] Lamont relies on the term 'boundary work' to explain this differentiation process between two groups in order to carve out a group identity. Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners*.

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Transcript Rules

(...)	pause
(long pause)	long pause
(very long pause)	very long pause
(?)	word transcriber did not understand
[?]	sentence transcriber did not understand
[xxx]	summarized content
[...]	omitted text
...	rupture
(p, mp, f, mf, ff)	amplitude
(acc)	acceleration of words or sentences (spoken quickly), for example "I am Italian."
(acc)	The (acc) is positioned after the accelerated speech. Sometimes if longer units are spoken, the accelerated part is set in between two signals of (acc). For example, (acc) speech speech speech speech (acc). This is also true for (p, mp, mf, ff)
xxx	words or sentences spoken slowly
<u>xxx</u>	stress on sentences and words
xxx	read out loud
(laughs)	laughing
(sighs)	sighing
(xxx)	comment from transcribers cw/mkm, for example: ("clears her throat")
(leaves the table)	comments on non-vocal communication
'xxx'	quote
a-e-t-o-s	spelling